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Emergence

by

Dominique (Nika) Meri Blasser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Drawing/Intermedia

Department of Art and Design

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Spring 2013

Edmonton, Alberta

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Dominique (Nika) Blasser
DVD Image List

Blasser_01
Emergence gallery installation view 1
2012

Blasser_02
The Edge of Canada
2012
digital photo printed on somerset enhanced velvet paper, mini led packs
20 x 20 inches

Blasser_03
Ice Floe
2012
digital photo printed on somerset enhanced velvet paper, mini led packs
20 x 20 inches

Blasser_04
Optical Vibration (diptych)
2012
aluminum foil, wood, acrylic paint, case fans, batteries and switches
72 x 54 inches each panel

Blasser_05
Sight of Sound
2012
sonotube, carborundum, vinyl coated fabric, paint, polyfil, museum board, ipod and bass amp with
original music (Sight of Sound composition 9 minutes 45 seconds)
33 inches tall x 48 inches diameter

Blasser_06
detail of Sight of Sound
2012
sonotube, carborundum, vinyl coated fabric, paint, polyfil, museum board, ipod and bass amp with
original music (Sight of Sound composition 9 minutes 45 seconds)
33 inches tall x 48 inches diameter

Blasser_07
Danse Macabre for Gordana
2012
powdered charcoal, plastic discs, glue (wall installation)
11 feet x 20 feet

Blasser_08

installation view of Danse Macabre for Gordana

2012

powdered charcoal, plastic discs, glue (wall installation)

11 feet x 20 feet

Blasser_09

installation view of Slow Blue Wave

2012

tv monitor, digital video

42 inch monitor; video duration: 9 minutes 52 seconds

Blasser_10

Emergence gallery installation view 2

2012

Blasser_11

Saskatchewan River

2012

digital photo printed on somerset enhanced velvet paper, mini led packs

20 x 20 inches

Blasser_12

Spring Melt

2012

digital photo printed on somerset enhanced velvet paper, mini led packs

20 x 20 inches

Blasser_13

Frost Garden I

2012

salt and prussian blue on somerset, wood, acrylic paint

72 x 48 inches

Blasser_14

Frost Garden II

2012

salt and prussian blue on somerset, wood, acrylic paint

72 x 48 inches

Blasser_15

Ribcage

2012

salt and prussian blue on somerset, wood, acrylic paint

48 x 72 inches

Blasser_16

Installation view of Silver Screen

2012

installation with digital video, silver streamers, wood

screen dimensions: 16 feet tall x 8 feet wide; video duration: 5 minutes 47 seconds

Blasser_17

Installation view of Silver Screen

2012

installation with digital video, silver streamers, wood

screen measured 16 feet tall x 8 feet wide; video duration: 5 minutes 47 seconds

Blasser_18

Gallery installation view 3 with Silver Screen

2012

Blasser_19

View of gallery front window with Danse Macabe (on left) and Slow Blue Wave video (on right)

2012

Blasser_20

exhibition poster with still image from Slow Blue Wave, poster designed by Sue Colberg

2012

Blasser_21

Show card with standard color target

2012

DVD Image List - Videos

Blasser_22

Slow Blue Wave

2012

digital video

9 minutes 52 seconds

Blasser_23

Video of gallery installation of Silver Screen

2012

digital video (documenting installation)

3 minutes 31 seconds

Blasser_24

Video of installation of Sight of Sound

2012

digital video (documenting installation)

44 seconds

nika blasser

education

- 2010-12 Master of Fine Arts – candidate, Intermedia & Drawing, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
- 2000-04 Bachelors of Art in Painting, Drawing and Printmaking, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
- 1998-99 Fine Arts Major, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York

exhibition history

- 2012 Emergence (solo show), FAB Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
- New Alberta Contemporaries, Esker Foundation Gallery, curated by Caterina Pizanias
 Calgary, Alberta
- Quotationalism, FAB Gallery, curated by Lisa Claypool, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
- 2011 Gifted: Portland Visual Art Exchange, Littman Gallery, curated by Becca Bernstein and
 TJ Norris, Portland, Oregon
- 2010 Cloudbusting (solo show), Beppu Wiarda Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- 2009 5⁵, Beppu Wiarda Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- Holy Sheet, Gallery Homeland, Portland, Oregon
- Small Show, Beppu Wiarda Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- 2008 Introductions 2008, SAM Gallery, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington
- True Nature, Beppu Wiarda Gallery, curated by Victor Maldonado, Portland, Oregon
- Holy Sheet, Gallery Homeland, Portland, Oregon
- 2007 Portland Modern: The Environmentalists, Portland Art Center, curated by Victor
 Maldonado, Portland, Oregon
- 2006 Alien and Sedition, Mark Woolley Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- 2004 Contemporary Studio Practices Exhibition, Dean's Gallery, Portland State University
 Portland, Oregon
- 2003 100 x 100, Soundvision Gallery, curated by TJ Norris, Portland, Oregon
- 2002 burn/scratch/scar, Karl Davis, Evan Serrill and Nika Blasser, Littman Gallery, Portland
 State University, Portland, Oregon
- 2001 Artists Respond: September 11, Savage Gallery, Portland, Oregon

1999 Student Show, Houghton House Gallery, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva
New York

teaching & university service

2012 Instructor, Art 340 Life Drawing, University of Alberta

Curated and organized Gesture and Embodied Drawing, undergraduate life drawing show
Rutherford Library South, University of Alberta

Projections II Video Workshop, presenter, University of Alberta

Vice President, Art & Design Graduate Association
Organizational Committee: Instability In Visual and Material Culture, conference, University of Alberta
Organizational Committee: Unstable Natures, exhibition, Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

2011 Instructor, Art 340 Life Drawing, University of Alberta

Lab Assistant, Instructor Hahn: Art 240, University of Alberta

Lab Assistant, Instructor Visscher: Art 240, University of Alberta

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Professor Ingram: Art 340, University of Alberta

Lab Assistant, Professor Zivkovik: Art 134, University of Alberta

Projections Video Workshop, presenter, University of Alberta

Participant, Experience Master Printmaking with International Artists, workshop and demo with
Ryoji Ikeda, Walter Jule and Maurice Pasternak, University of Alberta

2010 Graduate Research Assistant, Professor Caulfield, University of Alberta

Lab Assistant, Instructor Visscher: Art 240, University of Alberta

Facilitator, Life Drawing Sessions (fall term), University of Alberta

Installation assistant for Perceptions of Promise exhibition, Glenbow Museum, Calgary

2009-10 Member, Native American Art Council, Portland Art Museum

2003 Developed and co-taught an elective college course, "Gallery Appreciation", Portland State
University

2002 Developed and co-taught an elective college course, "Gallery Management", Portland State
University

2001-03 Student Activities and Leadership Committee Board, Nominated Representative of the Visual
Arts for the Fine and Performing Arts Department, Portland State University

2001-03 Member, College Art Association, attended annual CAA Conferences in
Philadelphia (2002) and New York (2003)

awards

- 2012 Graduate Travel Assistant for Professor Allen Ball, SSHRC funded research trip to London, U.K.
- 2011 Alberta Foundation for the Arts Graduate Scholarship in Art & Design
Melba Sadler Graduate Scholarship in Art & Design
- 2010 Entrance bursary, University of Alberta
- 2004 Friends of the Gilkey Center Award for Artistic Merit, Portland Art Museum

related professional experience, selected

- 2005-2010 Quintana Galleries, Portland, Oregon
Assistant Director, Feb 2008 – Sept 2010
Assistant to the Director, Sept 2005 – Feb 2008
Gallery Assistant, March 2005 – Sept 2005
- 2001-2003 Littman & White Galleries, Portland State University
Gallery Coordinator, Feb 2002 – Aug 2003
Gallery Assistant, July 2001 – Feb 2002

selected press & publications

- 2012 Caterina Pizanias, The New Alberta Contemporaries, exhibition catalogue, Esker Foundation
Calgary, Alberta, p. 26-27
- Bryne McLaughlin, "The New Alberta Contemporaries: Western Promises", Canadian Art
Online, July 26, 2012
- Department of Art & Design News, "The New Alberta Contemporaries Exhibition Features Art
Work by U of A Students", online article, July 11, 2012
- 2010 Lisa Radon, Recommended Openings, Ultra PDX, art blog, July 1, 2010
- 2009 Richard Speer, 5 x 5 at Beppu Wiarda, WW Recommends, Willamette Week, December 30,
2009 – January 5, 2010
- Eva Lake, "Nika Blasser at Beppu Wiarda", LoveLake video interview & blog post, March 1,
- 2008 Brian Libby, "Group Dynamics" review of True Nature, The Oregonian Arts and Entertainment
August 22, 2008, p. 34,37
- 2007 Victor Maldonado, Portland Modern, exhibition catalogue, p. 7-9

nika blasser

emergence

In emergence, I seek to generate a space of exploration and an environment in which natural phenomena are coaxed to unfold before our eyes. My work is permeated by an attentiveness to material dynamism and how seemingly mundane components can be used to reveal, rupture or redeploy our perceptual awareness. I am fascinated by the juncture of a mediating hand and the forces of nature. By setting the conditions for phenomenological happenings with my artwork, I look to create a meditative and immersive experience of reflection.

During the last two and a half years I have researched materials, explored various methodologies, and have developed my work by using the studio as an artistic laboratory through which to expand my visual lexicon. Many of my realizations were made possible through quite personal encounters with my environment. These works are intrinsically linked to my experience of time and place while living in Edmonton.

This exhibition is specifically organized to re-articulate our bodily encounter with the world we inhabit. My aim is to set a tone of participatory observation from the moment the viewer enters the gallery. On first entering, viewers will encounter an atmospheric soundscape; this initial sensory experience is transmuted into a form of drawing, as sound waves generate visual representations through a cymatic structure.

The forces of time, nature and technology collide in other works, emphasizing the tension between synthetic and organic forms. I am interested in how our bodies enter this territory; mediating and influencing the spaces separating these elements. For instance, how aluminum foil can act as medium to disrupt the flow of light and sound. As the silver membrane quietly pulses with the movement of air, fracturing and faintly reflecting the viewer's body in space, we come to notice many of its more subtle physical properties as it transmits its sonic presence with soft ticks and murmurs. This uneasy position of passive vitality is reminiscent of a passage by Baudrillard: "Two bodies side by side, which are not asleep and know it: a strange kind of communication sets in between them,

formed of respect for simulated sleep, and yet it needs to betray itself by some furtive sign—a breathing pattern which is not that of real sleep or movements which are not those of a dreaming body”¹.

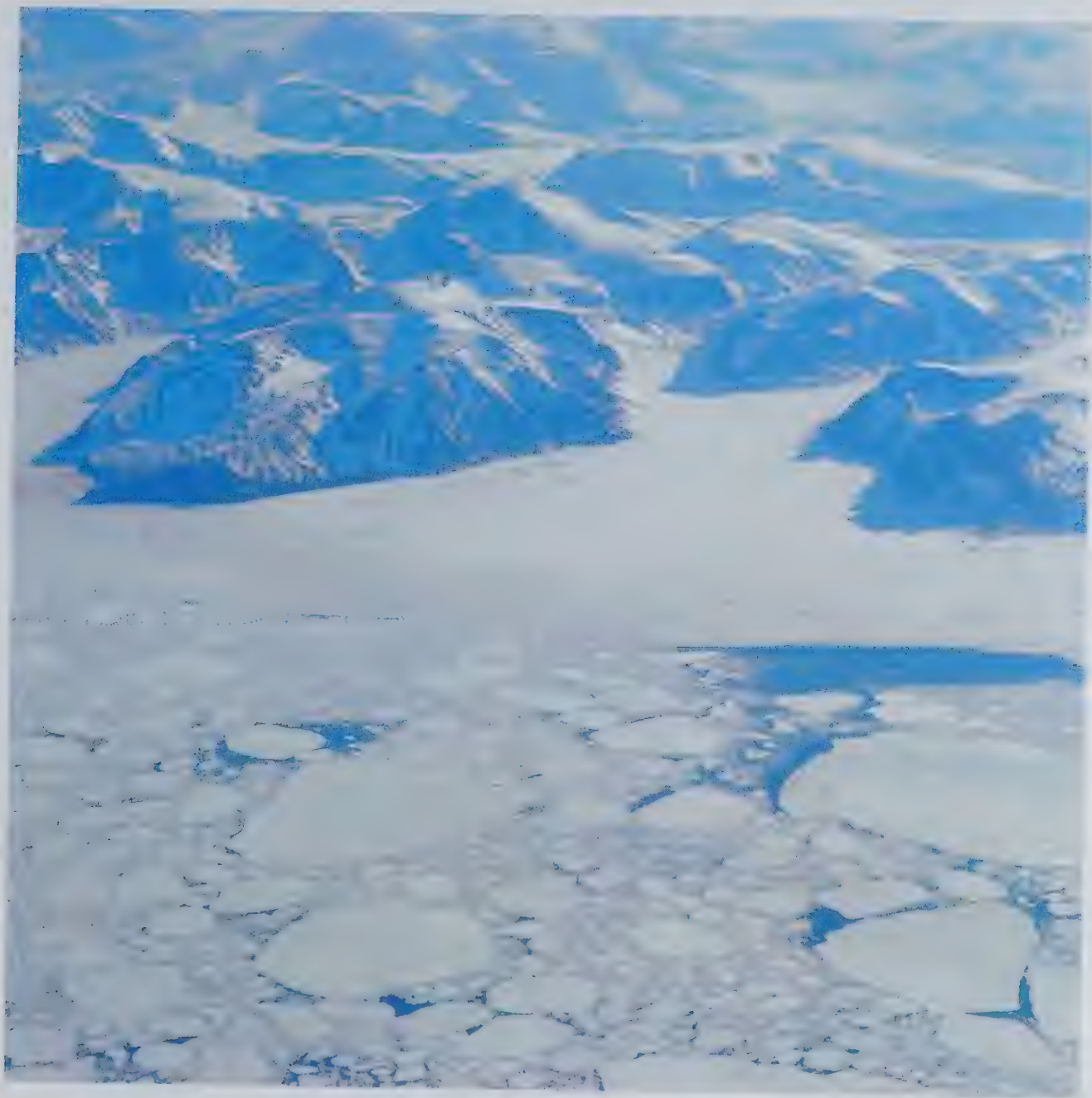
My work investigates the conditions that draw attention to the forces of nature that surround us and often go unseen. As spectators, something of ourselves is revealed in how we witness and translate the articulation of time and space in the environments of these pieces. I frequently find myself awed by the movement and possibilities of a material; through my practice I attempt to manifest and to share these marvelous occurrences.

acknowledgments

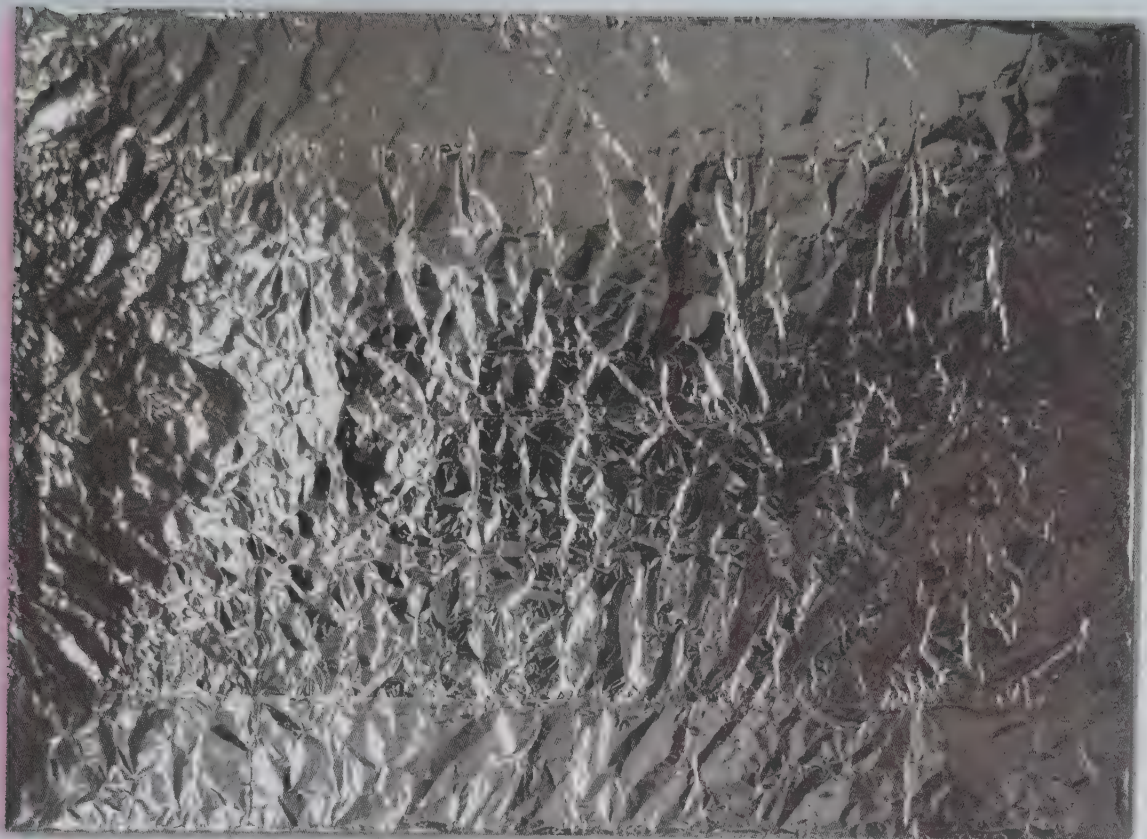
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to some of the many people who I have had the fortune of working with during my studies at the University of Alberta. The faculty and staff of the Department of Art and Design graciously allowed me the space, time and support to create my thesis work. I am especially thankful for the guidance of my deeply talented and accomplished supervisory committee: Allen Ball, Liz Ingram, Steven Harris, Scott Smallwood and Cezary Gajewski; you have all been tremendously inspiring and each of your voices are present in this body of work. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing encouragement of the following people: Daniela Schlüter; Gordana Zivkovic; the technicians in Print and Drawing, Cam Wallace and Steven Dixon; Justine Gill and Clare Peters in ARC; and Blair Brennan and the FAB Gallery staff for making my work look so good. I am grateful for the friendship of all of my peers, but most notably Alysha Creighton, Megan Hahn, Fran Cullen and Noelle Belanger, who have helped to keep me sane during the last couple of years. I am always encouraged by the kind words of my parents, Anya Blasser and Peter Auseklis. Most of all I would like to thank my husband, Karl Davis, for his tremendous love and support and for embarking on this journey with me. I am so thankful for all of you; none of this would have been possible without you.

1. Jean Baudrillard. “Cool Memories.” Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings. 2nd ed. Ed. Mark Poster (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001) 230.



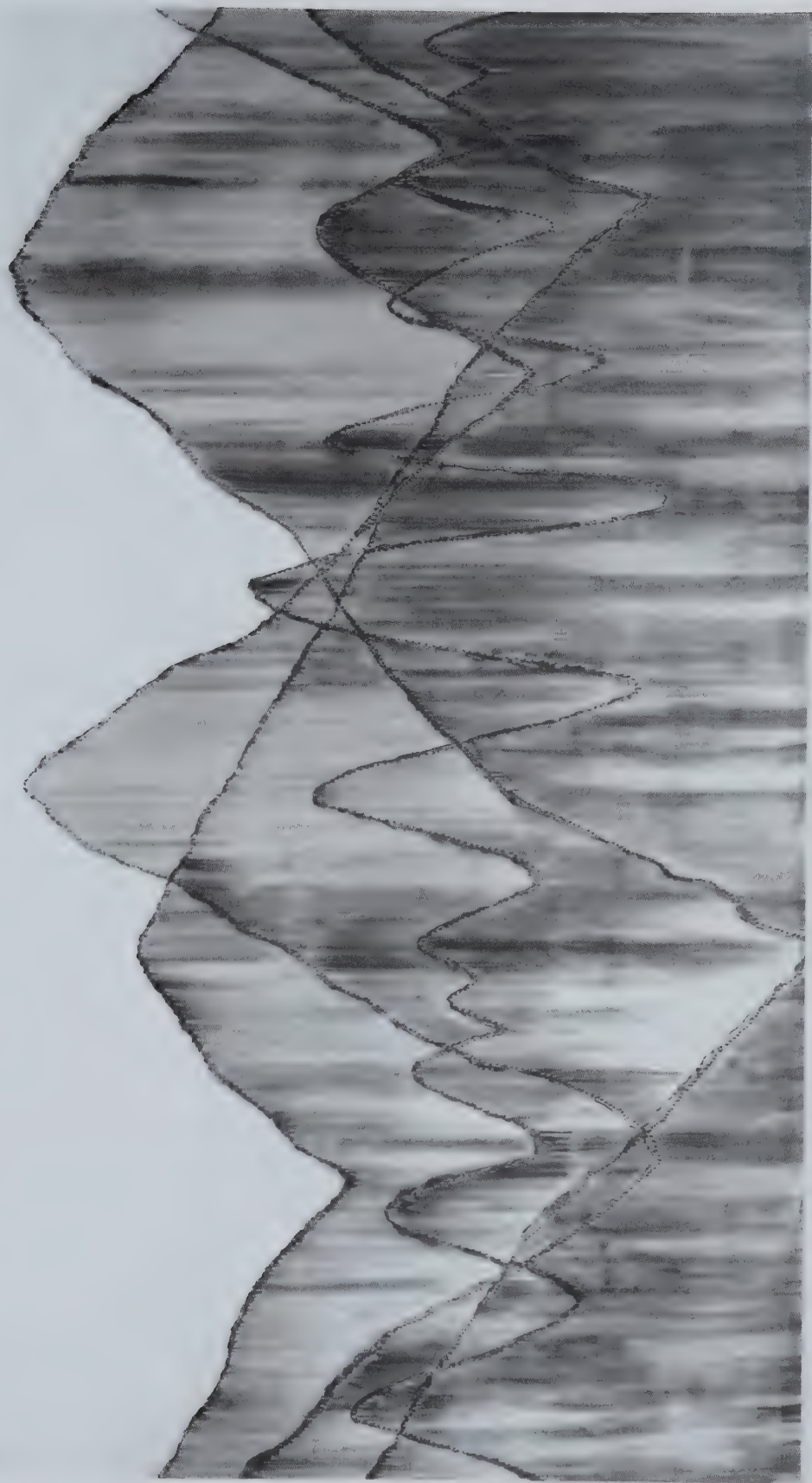




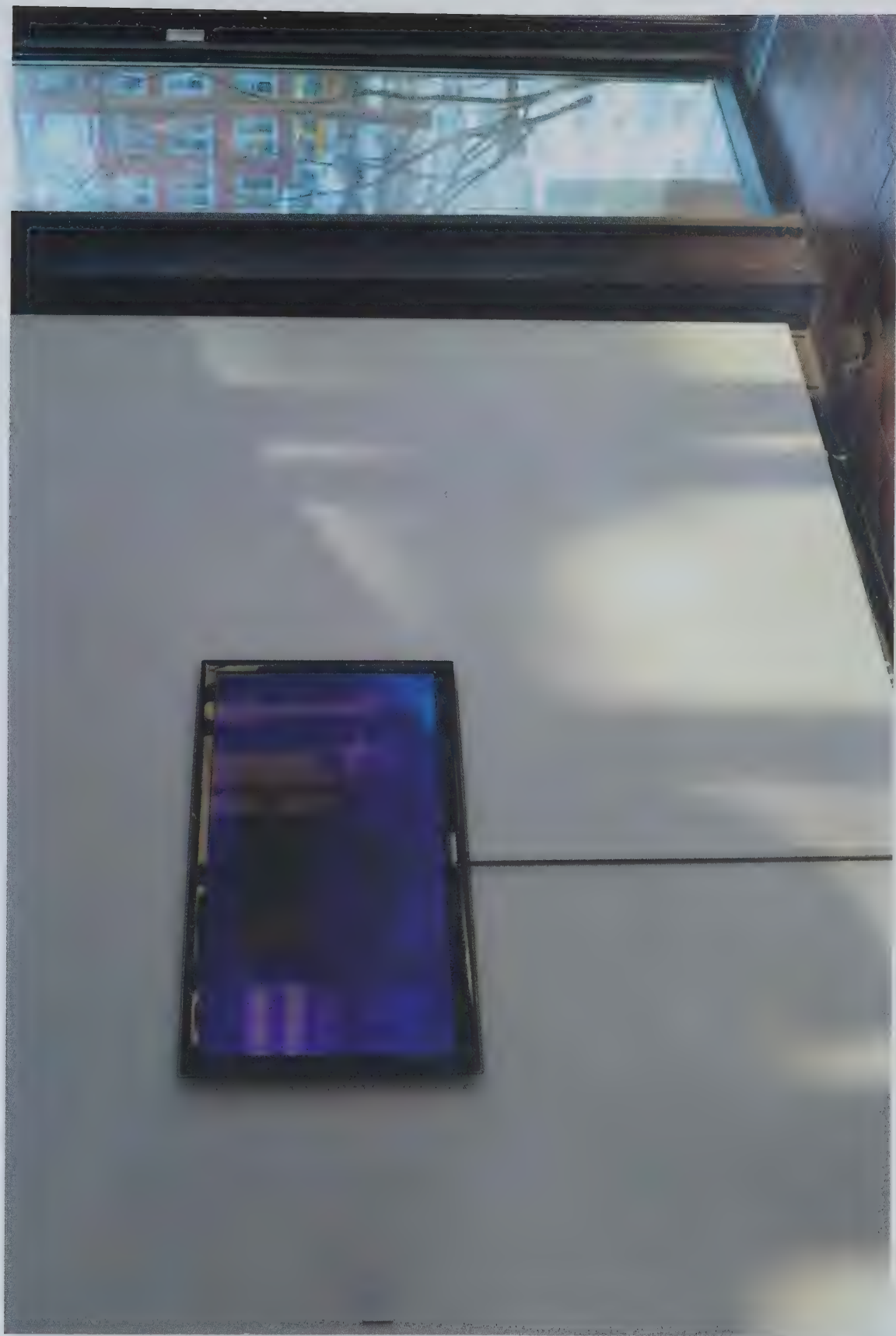






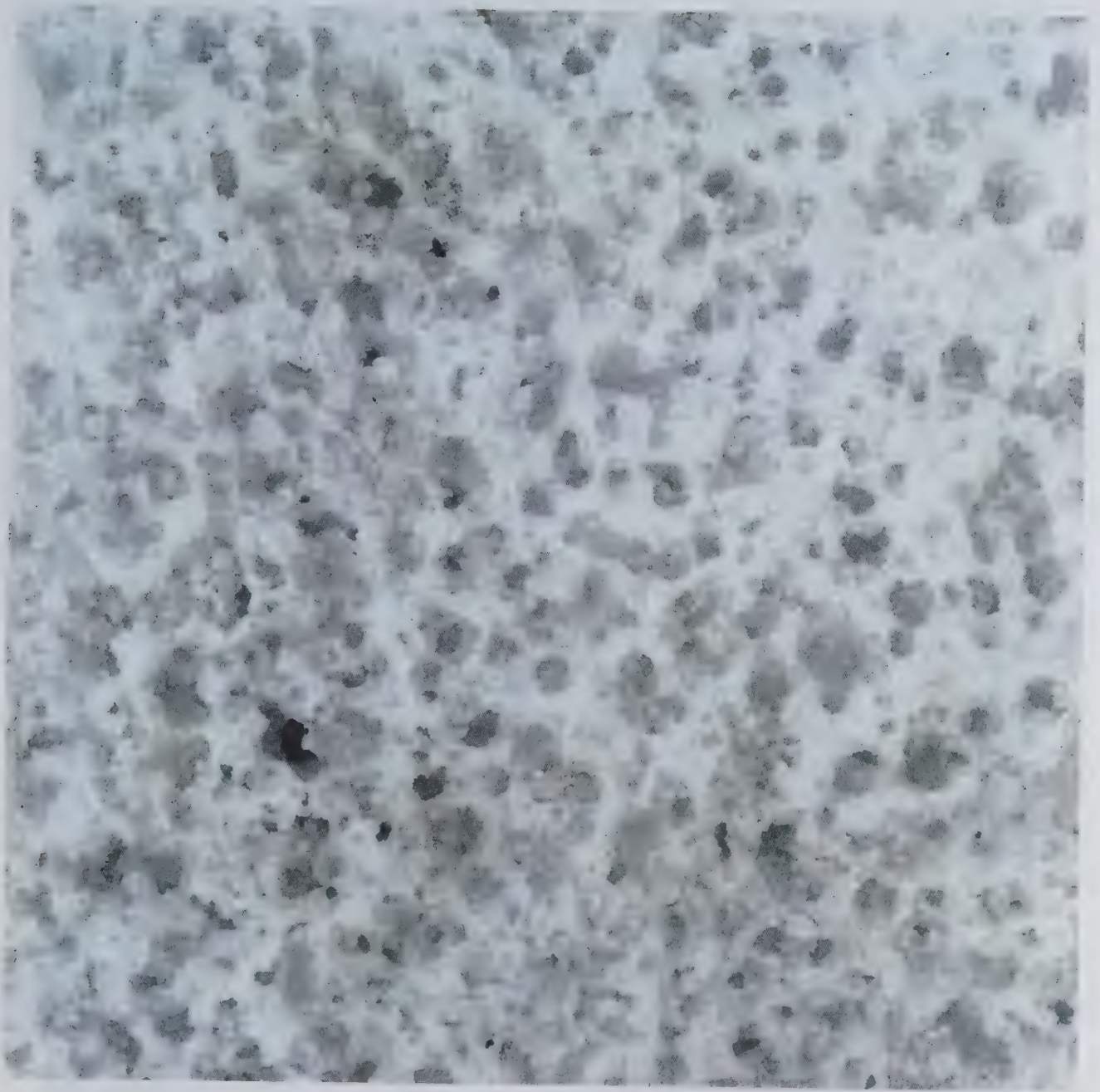










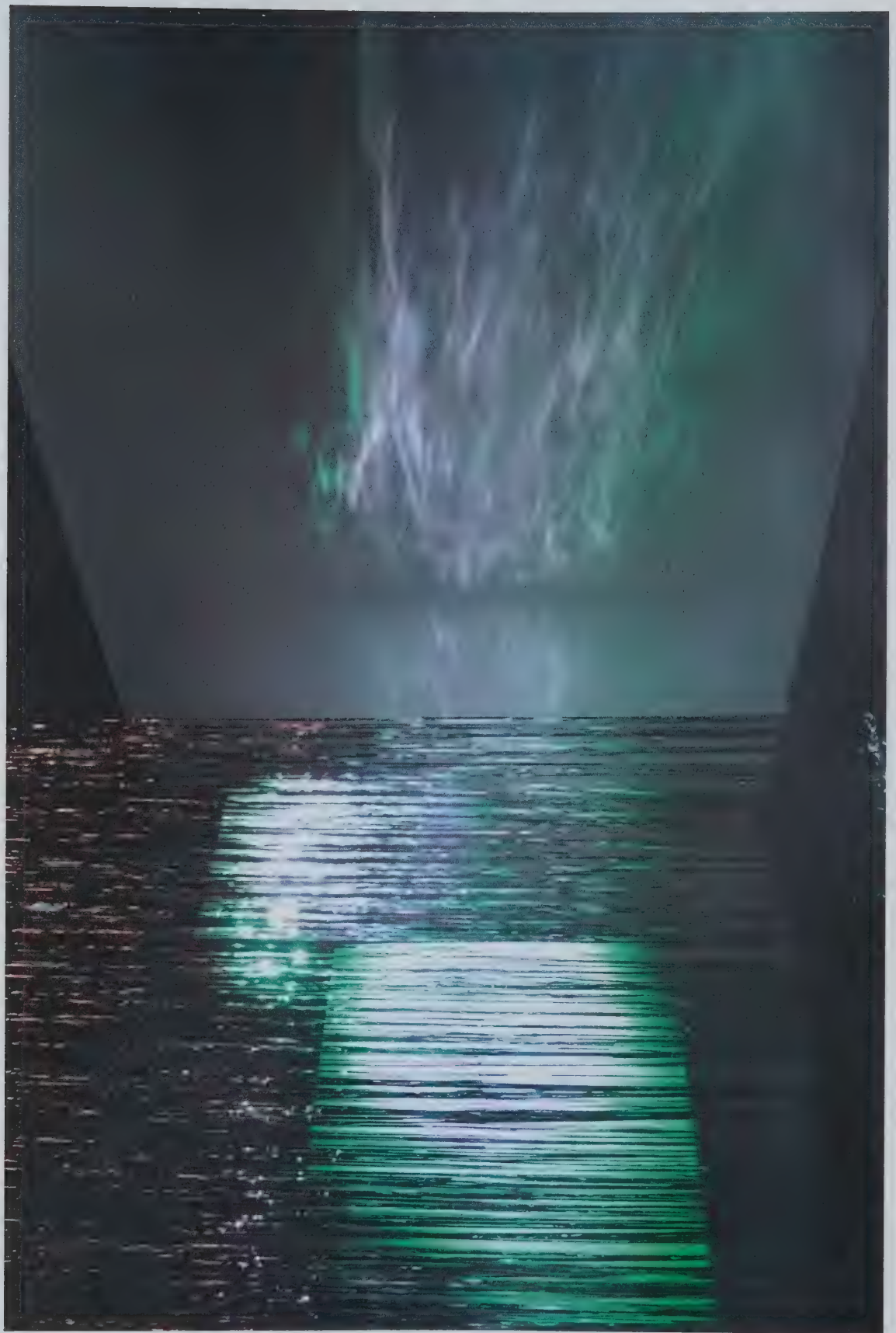












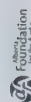
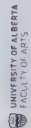




11 - 23 december 2012 & 3 - 12 january 2013

nika blasser
emergence

this exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of master of fine arts in drawing & intermedia
opening reception thursday, 13 december 7:00 - 10:00 pm, fine arts building, 89 avenue 6112 street, edmonton, alberta
image: video still from blue wave









nika blasser

emergence

11–23 december 2012 & 3–12 january 2013

opening reception: thursday, 13 december 7:00 – 10:00 pm

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this exhibition is the final visual presentation for
the degree of master of fine arts in drawing & intermedia

image: frost garden, salt and prussian blue on paper

gallery hours:

tuesday to friday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

saturday 2:00 – 5:00 pm

closed sunday, monday and statutory holidays

1-1 fine arts building, 89 avenue & 112 street

edmonton, alberta, canada

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(FINE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY)

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